

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02 OMB-01

SIL-01 LAB-04 MCT-01 /065 W

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R 291040Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4000

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

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SUBJECT: THE PHIKKU THANON AFFAIR

REF: BANGKOK 26822

SUMMARY. NSCT ORGANIZING DEMONSTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 29 AT SANAM LUANG TO DEMAND OUSTER OF THANOM AND IMMEDIATE ARREST OF MURDERERS OF TWO ACTIVISTS. COMMERCE MINISTER DAMRONG SAYS THANOM REFUSED INITIAL GOVERNMENT REQUEST THAT HE LEAVE TEMPORARILY FOR BODGAYA, INDIA. PRIME MINISTER SEES SUPREME PATRIARCH. NO SIGNIFICANT ACTIVIST ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF BANGKOK. BANGKOK QUIET, ALTHOUGH POLICE GEARED FOR POSSIBLE TROUBLE. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE NATIONAL STUDENT CENTER OF THAILAND (NSCT)
AND THE LABOR COUNCIL OF THAILAND (LCT), ANNOUNCED

ON SEPTEMBER 28 THAT THEY AND OTHER ACTIVIST GROUPS WOULD HOLD A DEMONSTRATION AT SANAM LUANG (PHRAMAINE GROUNDS) AT 3 PM ON SEPTEMBER 29 TO DEMAND THE IMMEDIATE OUSTER OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER THANOM KITTIKHACHON AND THE IMMEDIATE ARREST OF THE MURDERERS OF TWO ANTI-THANOM ACTIVISTS WHO WERE MURDERED IN NAKHON PATHOM ON SEPTEMBER 24 (REFTEL). THE ACTIVIST LEADERS, LED BY SUTHAM SAENGPRATHUM, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE NSCT, HAD EARLIER HANDED THEIR DEMANDS TO PRIME MINISTER M.R. SENI PRAMOT, AND TOLD THE PRESS THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT TOUGH ENOUGH IN ITS HANDLING OF THE THANOM AFFAIR.

2. THE NSCT STILL LINKS THE DEATH OF THE TWO ACTIVISTS TO THEIR ANTI-THANOM ACTIVITIES IN SPITE OF STATEMENT BY ASSISTANT DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE, LTG NARONG

MANHANON ON SEPTEMBER 27 THAT THE POLICE NOW BELIEVE THAT THE MOTIVE OF THE MURDERS WAS PERSONAL REVENGE AND NOT POLITICAL.

3. DAMRONG LATTHAPHIPHAT, ACTING COMMERCE MINISTER AND HEAD OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH NEGOTIATING WITH THANOM FOR HIS RETURN TO EXILE, SAID ON SEPTEMBER 28 THAT THANOM, THROUGH HIS RELATIVES, HAD REFUSED A REQUEST BY THE COMMITTEE THAT HE LEAVE THE COUNTRY TEMPORARILY FOR BODGAYA IN INDIA. THANOM WOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN IF HIS FATHER'S CONDITION WORSENERD OR WHENEVER HE FELT IT NECESSARY TO RETURN. DAMRONG ADMITTED THAT EFFORTS TO PERSUADE THANOM TO LEAVE MIGHT TAKE SOME TIME AND ASKED THE ACTIVISTS TO ACT WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE CONSTITUTION.

4. PRIME MINISTER SENI PRAMOR PAID A BRIEF CALL ON THE SUPREME BUDDHIST PATRIARCH OF THAILAND ON SEPTEMBER 29. HE REFUSED TO DIVULGE THE REASON OF HIS VISIT, ALTHOUGH CONSIDERED OPINION IS THAT HE DISCUSSED THE THANOM AFFAIR AND MAY HAVE ASKED THE PATRIARCH'S ASSISTANCE IN PERSUADING OR REQUESTING
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THANOM TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR THE SAKE OF TRAN-
QUILITY IN THAILAND.

5. COMMENT: EXTENT OF ATTENDANCE AT THE SEPTEMBER 29 NSCT RALLY WILL GIVE FURTHER INDICATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ITS EFFORTS TO BUILD UP PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE OUSTER OF THANOM. TO DATE PUBLIC CONCERN, AS MEASURED BY ATTENDANCE AT RALLIES, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN LOW. PREVIOUS PUBLIC RALLY SEPTEMBER 25 ATTRACTED NO MORE THAN 3,000 PERSONS,

AND EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED NO INFORMATION OF ANY SIGNIFICANT ANTI-TANOM ACTIVITY OUTSIDE OF BANGKOK. AMCONSUL UDORN REPORTS THAT HE HAS OBSERVED NO ANTI-TANOM POSTERS IN UDORN OR NEARBY CITY OF KHON KAEN. THE CONSULATE RECEIVED A REPORT THAT STUDENT ACTIVISTS AT UDORN TEACHERS' COLLEGE ATTEMPTED TO ORGANIZE A DEMONSTRATION SEPTEMBER 24 PROTESTING THANOM'S RETURN BUT FAILED IN THEIR EFFORTS BECAUSE OF LACK OF STUDENT SUPPORT. THE CONSULATE'S LOCAL ASSISTANT REPORTS HE OBSERVED NO INDICATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY IN KHON KAEN OVER THE THANOM ISSUE.

6. AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI REPORTS THAT, DESPITE REPORTS THAT THERE WOULD BE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION IN CHIANG MAI CIT 27 SEPTEMBER TO PROTEST THE MURDER OF TWO LEFTIST ACTIVISTS IN NKHON PATHON, THE CITY WAS QUIET, POSSIBLY DUE TO A HEAVY RAINSTORM. THE RAIN HAS STOPPED, BUT THERE IS NO INDICATION OF A DEMONSTRATION IN THE OFFING. EVEN THE CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IS QUIET.

7. BANGKOK REMAINS CALM, BUT THE POLICE ARE ALERT TO PREVENT VIOLENCE, WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ACTIVISTS BELIEVE COULD OCCUR AT FORTHCOMING RALLY.

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